



Eugene Police Department

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City of Eugene  
777 Pearl Street  
Eugene, Oregon 97401  
(541) 682-6804 FAX

## NEWS RELEASE

For further information, contact:

Rachel Anderson, Public Information Specialist, at 682-5197, or  
Melinda Kletzok, Public Information Director, at 682-5124

### **New Cell Phone Law Takes Effect January 1, 2010**

***Also: changes to Oregon's "Move Over" law***

Beginning January 1, 2010, Oregon's new "Cell Phone" law takes effect and the Eugene Police Traffic Enforcement Unit would like to urge motorists to begin making preparations now for this significant change.

The primary goal of HB2377 is to improve Oregon roadway safety by reducing driver distractions. Distracted drivers are often to blame for motor vehicle-related crashes and the use of cell phones by drivers is one of the leading distractions. HB2377 changes ORS 811.507 and specifically prohibits the use of "mobile communications devices" for talking or texting while driving unless the driver meets one of the specific exceptions. The main exceptions to the law are for drivers 18 years of age or over who are using a "*hands free accessory*," drivers who are operating a vehicle in the scope of their employment and the vehicle *is necessary for the person's job*, and for emergencies. Drivers under the age of 18 years are not permitted to use a mobile communication device while driving. In Eugene, the base fine for violating this law is \$115. For a list of exceptions and other specifics about the law please use this link to the actual house bill: <http://www.leg.state.or.us/09reg/measure/hb2300.dir/hb2377.em.html>

In addition to the new "cell phone" law there are changes to Oregon's "Move Over" law that also take effect on January 1, 2010. ORS 811.147 – "Failure to Maintain Safe Distance from an Emergency Vehicle" has been

modified to include “roadside assistance vehicles” and “tow trucks.” Additionally, the new changes clarify that “slow down” means a driver must reduce their speed to at least 5 m.p.h. below the posted speed limit if they are unable to safely change lanes while approaching an emergency vehicle that is stopped with its emergency lights activated. Oregon’s “Move Over” law was passed in 2003 in an effort to improve the safety for police officers and other emergency personnel who must work along our state and local roadways. For details of this particular law, please refer to the below link: <http://www.leg.state.or.us/09reg/measures/hb2000.dir/hb2040.en.html>

If you’d like to arrange for an interview, please contact Public Information Director Melinda Kletzok at 682-5124.

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